new R&D schemes have been modified in priority list;

(b) if so, how many of them have so far been started;

(c) how many of them have been started in 1992;

(d) what was the amount utilised;

(e) whether any new highways are being planned in Madhya Pradesh: and

(f) if so, by what time work on these projects is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) In the Eighth Plan, 20 new R&D Schemes have been identified in the priority list.

(b) and (c) Four new Research Schemes have been sanctioned during 1993 and none during 1992.

(d) An amount of Rs. 7.4 lakhs has been released for these schemes so far.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Frustration in Truck Drivers by Highway Corruption

4150. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that thousands of truck drivers have been driven to the limits of frustration by brazen highway corruption;

(b) whether Government are aware that truck drivers being in no position to take on the law enforcing agencies, are forced to shell out crores of rupees every year to ensure a smooth passage for themselves and their vehicles through the country highways;

(c) whether Government are aware that there is a parallel enforcement wing in operation whereby permits are issued to truckers on a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis to officials; and

(d) if all the allegations indicated against (a), (b) and (c) above are correct, what steps have been made by the government to eradicate such corrupt practices; the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Some complaints have been received from truck operators/All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) regarding harassment and highway robberies.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) As far as the question regarding harassment and highway robberies, State Governments have been requested to take the following steps to reduce such types of instances :—

(i) for vehicles coming from outside the State, the document in respect of goods carried may be checked as far as possible only at the border points, and within the State there would be no checking for such vehicles which have already been checked at the State borders;

(ii) as far as possible, the checking of drivers should be conducted jointly by the Police/Transport Departments on predetermined interval and there should not be a daily checking;

(iii) State Governments would also consider the desirability of issuing instructions prohibiting officers of the Police Department from checking of motor vehicles on the road for documents etc. except in case the vehicle is involved in accident;

(iv) State Transport Departments/Police Chiefs have also been requested to hold discussions with the representatives of A.I.M.T.C. in this regard; and

(v) with the abolition of Pathkar with effect from 1-9-93, the instances of harassment to drivers, will be substantially reduced.

Development of National Highways by Private Sector

4151. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what is the amount asked for and provided for the construction, maintenance and development of National Highways; and

(b) what has been the response of private sector so far as construction and maintenance of National Highways are concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) For the current year 1993-94 the amounts asked for and provided are as under :

	Amount asked for	Amount provided
	(Rs. crore)	(Rs. crore)
(i) Development & Construction	655.00	559.00
(ii) Maintenance	350.00	194.49

(b) Response has not been encouraging So far, Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Infra-structure Leasing and Financial Services Limited (IL&FS) for taking up Panvel bypass on NH 4 in Maharashtra.

Replacement of Old Vessels in SCI

4152. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the normal life of a freight vessels;

(b) what is the total number of vessels at present in the Shipping Corporation of India and how many of these are considered to be older than the normal life of vessel;

(c) whether any programme was evolved by the Government to remove the Old Vessels in a phased manner and how many of the old vessels are likely to be removed within the next 2/3 years; and

(d) what has been the overall impact on the Shipping Corporation of India with the increasing number of Old Vessels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) The prescribed economic life for different types of vessels varies between 15 years and 25 years depending upon the type of the vessel and the run.

(b) At present the Shipping Corporation of India has 123 ships, out of which 6 have already completed their prescribed economic life.

(c) Shipping corporation of India sells/scraps vessels depending on the observed operating condition of the vessels as also the age norm as prescribed by the Government. When a vessel completes its prescribed economic life, a techno-economic study is carried out to assess the advisability of extending its life and a decision is taken accordingly. In the next 2/3 years, around 36 vessels of SCI fleet will complete their prescribed economic life and would thus be due for scrapping.

(d) With the increase in number of old vessels, the operating cost goes up while the financing cost comes down. The shipping Corporation of India carries out proper techno-economic study to determine the viability of the Ship, keeping in view the cost of replacement and availability of finance.

Fleet of Whiteline and Blueline Buses

4153. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while Red-line was taking an increasing toll of life, another fleet of white-blue-lined buses was inducted by State Transport Authority; and

(b) if so, the details of the scheme for induction of the new fleet and the reasons prompting such fresh inductions without any modification in the operation of the killer red-line scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) A fleet of 578 buses painted in sapphire blue and pearl cream colour have been given permits by S.T.A. in June, 1993 on termination of their agreement with the DTC.

The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 does not permit operation of private buses on permits obtained by DTC. Hence, the DTC terminated the agreements with them. The State Transport Authority of National Capital Territory of Delhi granted temporary permits to these buses on the same routes on which they were earlier plying in the interest of the commuters.

Complaints regarding Bus-Permits

4154. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state: